



BCHD PRESS RELEASE

Baltimore City Health Department

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Safe Streets East Site to Reopen, West Baltimore Program Expansion to Begin

New training and security protocols will strengthen program management and oversight, new RFP issued for City's fifth Safe Streets site

BALTIMORE, MD (September 4, 2015) –Baltimore City Health Commissioner Dr. Leana Wen announced today that the Safe Streets East location in McElderry Park will begin limited operations starting today, transitioning to full operations over the coming weeks, following a comprehensive review of the program which resulted in implementation of new training and security protocols to strengthen management and oversight.

Additionally Dr. Wen also announced that the Baltimore City Health Department (BCHD) has introduced today a Request for Proposals (RFP) to offer community- based organizations in West Baltimore the opportunity to bring the program credited with reducing gun violence to their neighborhoods. The new site will be Baltimore City's fifth Safe Streets location. Current sites include: Cherry Hill, Mondawmin, Park Heights, and McElderry Park.

“We know that violence spreads like an infection, but just like infectious diseases, it can be prevented,” said Health Commissioner Leana Wen. “Safe Streets is a critical component in stopping this contagion. By expanding this evidence-based initiative, we help reduce homicides, decrease gun violence, and save lives.”

Safe Streets Baltimore was launched by the Baltimore City Health Department in 2007 as a replication of the national Cure Violence program. This public health initiative employs and trains outreach professionals to de-escalate and mediate disputes that might otherwise result in acts of violence.

Following the arrest of two Safe Streets contractors in July, BCHD immediately suspended operations of the site until a thorough review was completed and improved best practices were adopted.

As part of the procedures, the Health Department partnered with Cure Violence to conduct a detailed analysis of the incident at Safe Streets east and to implement improved safety protocols and staff background checks. Safe Streets staff and management have all

gone through extensive retraining. Additionally, through collaboration between the Health Department, Cure Violence and the US Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs, new management procedures are being implemented to provide more support and oversight for the program's outreach professionals.

"Safe Streets works because our outreach workers have truly walked in the shoes of the people we serve and have the needed credibility in their neighborhoods," said Dr. Wen. "Despite risking their lives daily, these Safe Streets workers have had significant success in reducing violence in communities across Baltimore and we are thrilled to expand the program to a community that remains in need of support."

In 2014, Safe Streets workers had 15,000 client interactions and mediated 880 conflicts. More than 80 percent of interactions were deemed to be "likely" or "very likely" to result in gun violence. Three of the four sites have gone over a year without a fatal shooting.

For more information on the Safe Streets program, please visit <http://health.baltimorecity.gov/safestreets>

Community groups interested in a Safe Streets site, can review the RFP at <http://health.baltimorecity.gov/funding-grants-and-rfps>

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